

Small-Anthered Bittercress

Cardamine micranthera



Description - The small-anthered bittercress is found only along small streams of the Dan River and South Mayo River drainages in south-central Virginia and north-central North Carolina. This perennial herb is approximately 15 inches in height with white flowers. It was thought to be extinct until 1985, almost 30 years after it had last been seen. This plant was discovered in Virginia in 1990. Additional populations have been found since then, but its entire distribution is not known. In Virginia, this plant has been documented only from Patrick County.

Life History - Habitat for this plant includes seepages, wet rock crevices, streambanks, sandbars, and wet woods along streams. All populations are very small and are located in watersheds altered by residential and agricultural use. These areas are fully to partially shaded. Associated species include azalea, mountain laurel, viburnum, spicebush, birch, ironwood, beech,

tulip poplar, red maple, white pine, round-leaved bittercress, yellow root, and bluets. Flowering and fruiting occur in April and May, flowers have four petals, and brown seeds are contained in long, thin capsules.

Conservation - The small-anthered bittercress was federally listed as an endangered species on September 21, 1989. Threats include siltation, stream impoundment and channelization, conversion of habitat to agriculture or silviculture, herbicide runoff from nearby agricultural land and power line maintenance, trampling by cattle, flooding, severe drought, and competition from non-native species such as Japanese honeysuckle.

What You Can Do to Help - If you find a plant that appears to be the small-anthered bittercress, take note of the location and photograph the plant, if possible. Please do not remove the plant! Contact one of the following agencies for assistance:

Virginia Department of
Conservation and Recreation
Division of Natural Heritage
217 Governor Street, 3rd Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219
(804) 786-7951

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Virginia Field Office
6669 Short Lane
Gloucester, Virginia 23061
(804) 693-6694

References

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
1991. Recovery plan for the small-anthered bittercress (*Cardamine micranthera*). Atlanta, Georgia.

Wiebolt, T.F. 1995. Page 38 in K. Terwilliger and J. Tate, eds. A guide to endangered and threatened species in Virginia. McDonald and Woodward Publishing Company, Blacksburg, Virginia.



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<http://www.fws.gov>
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